



The NSW Government should stop putting cycling on the back burner

Bicycle NSW today backed calls for better cycling infrastructure in NSW after new figures released last week showed 2008 bike sales exceeded new car sales for the ninth successive year. But the peak body for cyclists said that the NSW Government should not wait, and immediately enact a handful of basic, low-cost reforms to improve bike safety.

"We desperately need to improve our cycling infrastructure to increase numbers of bikes on the road and reduce traffic congestion. However, while major improvements will not happen overnight there are many short term actions the NSW Government can take to make cycling safer at relatively no cost," Elizabeth Hole, acting CEO of Bicycle NSW, said.

"The NSW Government should stop putting cycling on the back burner. We need to act quickly as numbers of people using bikes are increasing rapidly and there are a number of short term initiatives – some at relatively no cost – that the NSW Government can implement to improve bike safety."

Figures released last week by the Cycling Promotion Fund put total vehicle sales for 2008 at 1,012,164 while bike sales were 38 per cent higher at 1,401,675.

"The boost in bike numbers shows that more people recognise the environmental, economic and health benefits of cycling. However, all these extra riders need to be accommodated and the Government must make changes to support the increase," Ms Hole said.

The calls come as the Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) prepares to release its BikePlan for NSW. Bicycle NSW will incorporate its recommendations as part of its submission to the Government.

"Bicycle NSW believes that the most simple initiatives, such as a compulsory inclusion of a bicycle related question into the license application test for all drivers, would massively increase awareness and understanding of bikes on NSW roads," Ms Hole said.

"There are two compulsory alcohol related questions in the questionnaire so it makes perfect sense that the addition of one cyclist safety question be included. And it would cost virtually nothing," Ms Hole said.

"We are first and foremost committed to promoting cyclist safety. We conducted a number of workshops at the end of last year, presenting us with the direct safety concerns of current and would-be cyclists."

"Bike riders across NSW have unanimously said they would ride more if our roads were more bicycle-friendly."

Other concepts are educational workshops for all bus drivers, and cyclist safety flyers that could be included in all driver license renewal documents. The key, Ms Hole said, is awareness through education.

"The road is for everybody – it would be ignorant and selfish for anyone to think otherwise. Cyclists, drivers and pedestrians need to follow road rules and keep an eye out for each other. This way NSW roads will be safer for all of us," Ms Hole concluded.

Elizabeth Hole

For more information on the PCAL BikePlan please visit:

[http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/new_nsw_bikeplan - whats_happening_and_how_to_get_involved](http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/new_nsw_bikeplan_-_whats_happening_and_how_to_get_involved)